Wanted Christmas Spirit

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A Christmas Play

in

Prologue, Three Scenes &

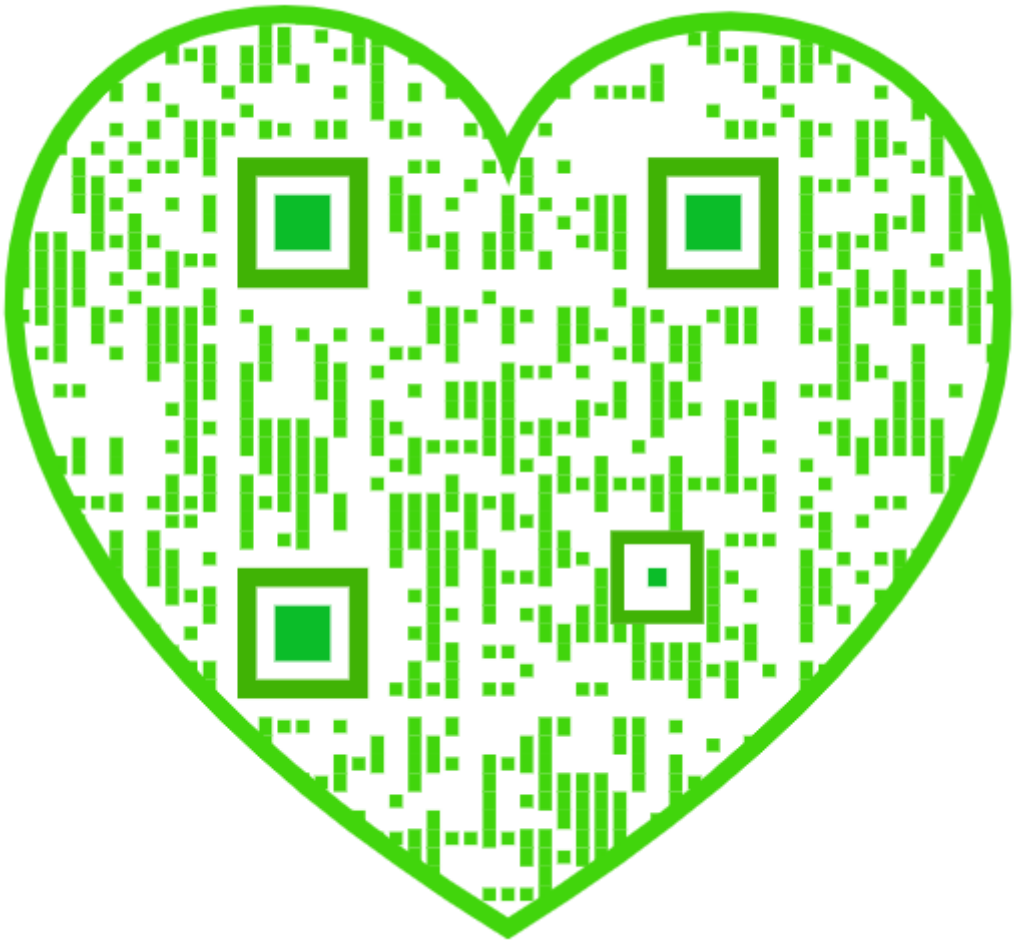
Epilogue

BY

HESTER G. HOPKINS

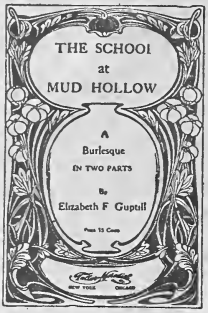
Tullar-Meredith Co.

265 West Thirty-sixth Street, New York City



NEW PLAYS

By Elizabeth F. Guptill



The School at Mud Hollow. A burlesque in two parts. 8 Males and 10 Females. Time about 2 hours. Price 35 cents.

PART I. In which is portrayed the difficulties encountered by Miss Arabella Pinkham, who has come to "Mud Hollow" to assume the responsible duties of "Teacher" in the school. In selecting "Mud Hollow" she seeks a change from the city life she is accustomed to, and finds plenty of it in the manners, customs and dialect of the pupils. From start to finish there is nothing but fun.

PART II. Which represents the last day at the school, when the proud parents are present to listen to the final examination of the class by the Supervisor and enjoy the program which is rendered by the pupils. Part II. offers an opportunity for about 60 minutes of the finest fun possible.

"The School at Mud Hollow" may be given in one evening, but for those who would prefer to make two evenings of it, or to give only one part, we offer the same work announced below under the title of *"The New Teacher at Mud Hollow School"* and *"The Last Day at Mud Hollow School"* either of which can be given as a complete entertainment without regard to the other one.

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The Twins and How They Entertained the New Minister. They have a delightful time telling family secrets to the "New Minister," who has called for the first time. They explain the necessity of seeing their mother to find out from her if she is "In," for so often she is "Out" when she is "In" and "In" when she is "Out." 2 Males and 1 Female. Time about 15 minutes. Price 10 cents.

The Hat at the Theater. A Farce by Anne Palmer. The large hat worn by Mrs. Henpeck, who is accompanied to the theater by her meek looking husband, provides a lot of laughs for the audience. The wearer occupies such a strategic position in the front row as to completely shut off a view of the stage for all who are so unfortunate as to occupy seats behind this wonderful head piece. "Jimmy," the small but persistent son of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, is the chief sufferer He, however, proves a close "second" to the hat as the chief cause for a demand upon the box office for the return of the money paid for tickets by the "audience." Eight characters, six males, two females. Very little staging and scenery required. Time, about 20 minutes. Price 25 cents, Postpaid.

Wanted
Christmas Spirit

A Christmas Play
in
Prologue, Three Scenes & Epilogue

BY

HESTER G. HOPKINS

Price 30 cents per copy
$3.00 per dozen, postpaid

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Two-sixty-five West 36th Street New York City

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Characters needed

22 females and 13 males are represented in the entire play, but not more than 8 females and 7 males are required in any act or scene, so the entire play could be given with 15 people, some of whom would assume different characters in various scenes. As there must be time allowed for change of setting for each scene, there will be ample time for change of costume as would be necessary if one person assumed more than one character.

PROLOG

Father Time
April Fool
St. Patrick's Day
Valentine's Day
Washington's Birthday
Thanksgiving Day
Fourth of July
Halloween
New Years
May Day
Christmas Day
Three Spirits
A Little Girl
An Old Woman
A Little Boy

SCENE 1

The little Princess
The Spirit. Little Girl
Herald
Guards
Pages
Ladies in waiting
Christmas Day

SCENE 2

Mrs. Hooligan
Jim
Fred
Maggie
Nellie
Tom
The Spirit. Old Woman
Christmas Day

SCENE 3

Mrs. Anybody
Gwendolen
Ruth (The Servant)
Robert
Willie
Millicent
Jane
The Spirit. Little Boy
Christmas Day

EPILOG

Christmas Day
Father Time

Number of copies needed

As some characters have but few lines to speak, 12 copies of the play would be sufficient if only 15 persons took part. To have less than 12 copies would require the copying of parts, which is contrary to law and would be false economy even tho such copying of parts was permitted by the publishers.

Costumes and Scenery

The costumes and scenery required are so simple to provide that the play is usable in almost any place where there is sufficient talent to take the parts represented by the various characters.

Each of the Days in the Prolog should be so costumed as to be easily identified. The following suggestions offer a simple and inexpensive plan.

APRIL FOOL could either wear jester's costume, with cap and bells, or could wear plain garb, and pointed cap.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY could be dressed entirely in green, or by any costume with green decorations. Shamrocks might be worked into the decoration scheme.

VALENTINE'S DAY. White dress, decorated with hearts.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY. Colonial costume. Carry hatchet.

THANKSGIVING DAY. Might wear a hat to represent a pumpkin, or a costume in which pumpkins could be used in scheme of decoration.

FOURTH OF JULY. Patriotic colors. Carry firecrackers and toy pistol.

HALLOWEEN. Witch costume.

NEW YEAR'S. Part should be taken by small girl, with fluffy white dress, decorated with tinsel.

MAY DAY. White dress, garlanded with flowers, which may be artificial.

CHRISTMAS. Any costume decorations which may suggest themselves as symbolizing the Christmas spirit.

FATHER TIME. Long flowing robes. Should have long white beard and white wig, and carry the traditional scythe.

THE PRINCESS and ladies in waiting may wear informal but rich costumes.
The costumes for the "Hooligans" in Scene 2, and the "Anybody Family" in Scene 3 will readily suggest themselves.

THE THREE SPIRITS should be dressed according to suggestions given on page 4.

THE PAGES, HERALD, ETC., may wear regulation costumes, or dark knickerbocker suits with wide white collars.

The stage settings may be as elaborate as desired, or if circumstances demand, very simple and inexpensive.
For the Prolog, there may be a raised platform with great chair at the center rear, over which could be a canopy if desired so as to represent a throne. Straight hanging draperies could be used.
For the Palace Hall, the same setting could be used, with an abundance of cushions, more elaborately arranged draperies, etc.
The Hooligan's House should be represented by a very poorly furnished living room or kitchen with a somewhat dilapidated table, old chairs, lounge, etc.
The scene for the "Anybody's" home should represent a well furnished library or living room. The necessary amount of furniture will readily suggest itself, and pictures, draperies, etc, may be used according to the desire of the arranger.

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no 1

Prologue

The Scene is laid in the Hall of Time

(*Father Time is seated in a great chair at the center rear. A crowd of days come running in, jostling one another;—Valentine's Day, April Fool, St. Patrick's Day, the Fourth of July, May Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Day, Etc. They dance about, holding hands. Christmas comes last, with hanging head, and downcast looks, and walking slowly across the stage, sits down on the floor in the corner.*)

April Fool. Get in line, get in line, everybody! All in line for the grand procession.—(*Puts his hands on the shoulders of Washington's Birthday, and starts marking time.*) Left, right, left, right,—hurry up, the rest of you!

(*With much scrambling, the days begin to form a line.*)

St. Patrick's Day. Here, me bye, 'tis mesilf that belongs between the two of of ye. Shure 'tis afther crowding me off the place intoirely yez are.

(*He squeezes in between Washington's Birthday and April.*)

Valentine's Day. (*Coquettishly.*) Can't we walk two and two? The rose is red, the violet's blue, I wish you'd let me walk with you!

St. Patrick's Day. Wid me, me darlint. (*He links arms with her.*)

Washington's Birthday. I *beg* pardon! Believe me, madam, your most obliged and obedient servant.

(*He moves Valentine's Day ahead of him. She makes eyes at him over her shoulder.*)

(*The line now starts moving in a sort of snake dance.*)

April Fool—Here you, Thanksgiving Day! You belong at the very end, do you know it?

Thanksgiving Day. (*Piously.*) Why should that trouble me? I have a great deal to be thankful for. I've been in the world later than any of you.

Fourth of July. (*Shooting a toy pistol at him.*) Well, you can't go back again till the last of any of us. Even I come five months ahead of you, so there!

Halloween. Even *I* come ahead of you. So there!

Valentine's Day. You mustn't fight, you awful boys.

New Years. (*Prancing.*) And I'm ahead of anyone! I'm the head of the line! Happy New Year, everybody! It's only a little while before I can see some real life.

Several Days together. Why, where is Christmas? He ought to be head.

(*The line stops its march.*)

Father Time. Yes, where is Christmas?

Christmas. (*Not looking up.*) I don't want to come.

May Day. Whatever is the matter with you?

Valentine. You are not in love, are you?

April Fool. You aren't playing a joke, are you?

Washington's Birthday. You are not sad, are you?

Fourth of July. You aren't mad, are you?

Father Time. Come here, my child.

(*Christmas comes slowly before his great chair.*)

Father Time. What is your name, child?

Christmas. Christmas.

Father Time. But your first name?

Christmas. (*Sobbing.*) M—m—Merry.

Father Time. You do not look it.

Christmas. I don't feel it.

Father Time. And why not?

Christmas. (*In a sudden burst.*) Nobody wants me.

(*Everyone exclaims.*)

Father Time. But I am sure you are mistaken. What makes you think people do not want you?

Christmas. They say so.

Father Time. Who says so?

Christmas. Lots of people. The princess of the great and mighty kingdom of Mintsofmoney, and the poor O'Hooligans of O'Hooligan street, and Mr. and Mrs. Anybody and their children who go to the (.....) church (*the name of any church or school where the entertainment is given.*) They're sitting right there now.

(*Points out into the audience.*)

A Voice from the Audience. (*As though continuing a conversation.*) Yes, my dear, as I was saying, Christmas has gotten to be a perfect nuisance. I only wish it were all over and done with.

Christmas. Just listen to that, now. They don't love me any more.

Father Time. Then I will make them love you. It only needs a little magic. I'll call up a spirit.

The Days. Oh, a spirit!

Valentine. I'm scared.

May Day. I'm going to shut my eyes.

Washington's Birthday. Do not be alarmed. I will protect you.

Christmas. What spirit?

Father Time. The proper spirit. I will send him into these homes before you to help prepare your welcome. Be still now, everyone. (*He rises, waves a staff, and a shapeless white spirit appears.*)

Spirit. Here I am.

Father Time. Divide into three.

(*The spirit flings off its covering, and proves to be three separate figures, a richly dressed little girl, wearing a crown, a queer old woman, and a very ragged little boy.*)

Father Time. (*To the first spirit.*) You must go to the King's palace. (*To the second spirit.*) And you to O'Hooligan street. (*To the third spirit.*) And you to the home of the Anybodys who go to (.....) church.

(*The spirits bow and go off.*)

Father Time. Come, Christmas, cheer up. I think you will find that people will love you this year as much as ever.

(*Music strikes up, the days take hands to dance about Christmas.*)

CURTAIN.

Scene I

The scene is laid in the Palace Hall.

(*The little princess is seated on a many-cushioned throne, very cross and sleepy. Ladies in waiting stand on either side, as well as pages and guards. A herald is reading to her from a great roll.*

Herald. (*Reading.*) Her most gracious, serene and bounteous Highness, Victoria, by the grace of God, princess of the mighty and powerful kingdom of Mintsofmoney, Grand Duchess of—

Princess. (*Yawning hugely.*) For mercy's sake, omit that part and get on to where I have something to do.

Herald. (*Fumbling.*) Victoria, by the grace— —er—er—Grand Duchess, er—that is—

Princess. I said,—omit it!

Herald. Yes, your Highness. (*Hunts through paper.*)

Princess. Either read, or else go away and let me alone.

Herald. I cannot seem to find the place, your Highness.

Princess. Then go away till you do.

(*She lolls back on her cushions, still yawning.*)

(*The curtains part and the first spirit comes in—the one dressed as a little princess.*)

Spirit. How do you do? (*Comes forward.*)

Princess. Well, for mercy's sake, who are you?

Spirit. I am your cousin Honoria Maria Louisa Constantia, and I have come to visit you for over Christmas.

Princess. What a perfectly awful time to come!

Spirit. Why?

Princess. Oh, I just hate Christmas.

Spirit. You *do!* Why, I love it.

Princess. You wouldn't if you were I. Never mind though. I am glad you have come. Perhaps it will not be so dull with you here. (*Suddenly.*) Whydidn't someone announce you?

Spirit. The page outside has fallen asleep.

Princess. (*Starting up.*) Why, the lazy little thing! He ought to be punished. What should he fall asleep for?

Spirit. I thought you looked rather sleepy, yourself.

Princess. That is a very different thing.

Spirit. Oh!

Princess. Well, it is! *Very* different.

Spirit. Of course, he is a lot younger than you, and he has been going home every night, instead of staying here at the palace, and that is a long walk for a little boy.

Princess. How in the world do you know that?

Spirit. Why, I asked the guard about him. He looked so tired,—poor little fellow!

Princess Why didn't the guard wake him up?

Spirit. I asked him not to.

(*She sits down on a cushion beside the throne.*)

Princess. (*More thoughtfully.*) Oh! (*After a pause.*) Of course if I had known anything about him, I'd have let him go home earlier. I just did not know.

Spirit. I was sure that was why. Shall I tell him he may go now?

Princess. No, wait! I did not say—

Spirit. But it is really late; and tomorrow is Christmas.

Princess. Well—I will—I'll send him home now;—and I will send him home in a carriage. There now! I am not so selfish as you think. And I tell you what I'll do—I'll let him have a holiday tomorrow and stay home with his mother. (*To a lady in waiting.*) Go and see that he is sent home, and tell him he need not come back tomorrow. (*To Spirit.*) I hope you are satisfied now.

Spirit. Oh, I knew you would do it, as soon as you heard about him.

Princess. (*Rather loftily.*) He is a lucky little fellow. I know a good many who would not be so kind to a servant. And now while he goes home to rest and sleep, I have to go on working; but that is always the way.

Spirit. Working?

Princess. The rehearsal. (*She motions the herald to approach.*) (*To the Spirit.*) I hope you don't mind. It must be gone over, so that I can appear at my best.

Spirit. What is it for?

Princess. For our horrible Christmas feast. We have to invite in the whole city tomorrow, and there's a fearful lot of ceremony to it. It is so stupid I nearly *die*! And it lasts pretty nearly *forever*.

Spirit. Why, I think that is splendid. How glad the people must be to see the palace, and how good the banquet must taste to all the little poor children.

Princess. I suppose they enjoy it well enough. I was not thinking of them. I was thinking of *me*.

Spirit. Oh!

Princess. I don't care what you think. It *is* hard on me. (*To Herald.*) Come now! Start in!

Herald. Her most gracious, serene and bounteous highness, Victoria, by the—

Princess. Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! I told you not to read that part!—Go on, now.

Herald. Highness, Victoria, by the grace—

Princess. (*Furiously.*) Idiot!

Spirit. (*To Herald.*) I know a very good thing for headaches. I wonder if you wouldn't like to try it?

Princess. Whoever said anything about headaches?

Spirit. Why, I think the poor man must have one. He acts as if he were half sick.

Princess. Well I never! Are you sick?

Herald. I will go right on, your highness. I will try to do better, this time.

Princess. Are you very tired, then? What is the matter?

Herald. Perhaps a little tired, your highness.

Princess. (*Half petulantly.*) Oh all right! Go home. I shan't need you any more. We will stop practising for tonight. Go on. (*The Herald bows and withdraws.* You make me do such silly things, Maria. I've sent my page home, and now I've sent my herald home, and I may very likely need them again.

Spirit. I am sure you will not. It is getting so late.

Princess. Yes, but I ought to have rehearsed. You see I am the principal sight at the banquet. Every one is looking at me, and I must be at my best. I have a lot of things to do. When I am announced I have to bow,—so! (*Acting it out.*) Then I give my hand to the mayor to be kissed—so—I am very gracious with them, you see,—then I ascend the throne,—so—and incline my head gracefully to the crowd—and then they all applaud. There's a lot more to it, and it really needs rehearsing. Of course it is an awful bore and I hate it,—but still I feel it my duty to appear very well.

Spirit. At any rate you can sit down.

Princess. I should hope so! Why not?

Spirit. I suppose some of the court people cannot.

Princess. Well of course, most of them do have to stand up behind my chair. It looks better;—and they can serve me from there. Why not?

Spirit. How long does the banquet last?

Princess. Hours and hours. (*She looks more thoughtful, then gets up and takes a rigid pose.*) It *is* rather tiresome, now I try it. (*To a court lady.*) Does it tire you to stand up?

Lady. A little, your highness.

Princess. Then, for mercy's sake, sit down! (*Tosses her a pillow.*) I mean it. Sit down. And you, and you, and you! (*Tosses pillows from the throne to the attendants, who sit on the floor on them with sighs of relief.*) Of course if any of you had spoken about it before—. You know, I have an idea. It must tire the guard a lot to stand with his arm out all the time. (*Stretches out her arm as if holding a spear.*) Why, it's awful, just you stand up a minute, Maria, and try it!

Spirit. (*Obeying*) It *is* hard.

Princess. It's terrible! And do you know, I never thought of that before! My guard! (*The guard steps inside the door, and stands at attention. The Princess throws him a pillow.*) I want you to sit down this minute, and put your spear on the floor. I don't want you to hold it any more. (*The guard withdraws, bowing. The Princess and spirit sit on the lowest step of the throne, together.*)

Spirit. If only we could arrange some way tomorrow.

Princess. (*Interrupting.*) I have just had another thought. That Herald has gone off with my speech of greeting for tomorrow, and I haven't learned it yet. Whatever shall I do?

Spirit. I should think the people would like it better if you greeted them your own way, without any set speech.

Princess. How ridiculous you are. Of course *they* probably would like it better, but don't you see, it is not a question of what they like or do not like. It is a question of what *I* like, and I like to be impressive.

Spirit. Oh!

Princess. *Now* what is the trouble?

Spirit. I thought,—but perhaps I was mistaken,—that you did not enjoy yourself very much at the banquet.

Princess. Well—I do not.

Spirit. And I thought the feast was given on purpose for the people.

Princess. Well—it is,—in a way.

Spirit. And yet this way, neither side fully enjoys it.

Princess. But if I went into it with the idea of giving the people a good time, I'd have to change everything. The whole thing would be different, if I went into it with *that* idea.

Spirit. What would you do?

Princess. Why, if I were just planning it to please them,—but mind you, this is "if"; I do not really consider doing it. I should not have the court people there at all. The town folks are terribly embarrassed by them; I should leave them to themselves, and do away with all the ceremony.

Spirit. How splendid!

Princess. No, no! I didn't say I would do it. I said "if."

Spirit. But why not do it?

Princess. I couldn't. It never has been done, and I am not sure that I want to, anyway. I suppose I *could* though.

Spirit. And the court people would like it better, too.

Princess. I suppose we could have a banquet of our own in my appartments. No, I'm afraid they wouldn't really enjoy that, either. If I were just planning it to please *them*, I'd let them have perfect freedom for the day to do as they wanted. Oh no, it couldn't be arranged, Maria. It is out of the question.

Spirit. I would help you.

Princess. I tell you what I would really like. I'd like to have a little party of my own for the children, for I am very fond of children, though I never have known any. Sometimes they wave their hands to me when I drive through the city and I have just longed to pick them up and hug them—but of course that would have been undignified. Do you—do you think—

Spirit—Yes, yes! I would help you!

Princess. But you see I could not do that if I let the court attendants go, for there would be nobody to do the work.

Spirit. I would help you!

Princess. Oh, I couldn't. I never did any work in my life. I do not know how. It is impossible.

Spirit. I would love so to help you.

Princess. How funny it would be! Suppose I had to wash dishes! A Princess washing dishes!

Spirit. I would help you.

Princess. And I tell you what I'd do;—and what I think I really will do. The people might feel hurt if I never came near them at all. So I'll make them a short little speech of greeting, and then ask if they will let me play with the children, just for the day. And I'll say something like this:—My good people,—no, I'll say my friends,—my friends, I welcome you with all my heart to the palace, which I want you to feel is your own home, not just for today, but for every day. (*For you know, that's true enough, Maria; I suppose it really was they who paid for and built it, thought I never thought of that before.*) And I'll say—this is your own feast, not mine, and I should do quite wrong to make you spend any of your time, listening to a stupid speech from me. But I want to stop long enough before I go to wish you all health and all happiness, and especially to wish you a very, very, very, Merry Christmas!

(*Christmas Day appears between the curtains of the door, smiling, just as the curtain falls.*)

Scene II

The scene is laid in the Hooligans' House

(*The mother is seated at the table, the children sprawled about in discontented attitudes. Fred* (*about ten*) *and Jimmie* (*about six*) *are quarrelling.*)

Jim. Say, wot yer t'ink I am? I aint gonna do it, so yer better lemme alone.

Fred. Aw, Chimmie, aint yer honest gonna take me?

Jim. (*Jerking loose.*) Naw I aint—so there!

Mother. (*Crossly.*) Quit yer scrappin', now, Chimmie!

Jim. Well, why don' he lemme alone, den? Wot yer t'ink I am? John D. Rockerfeller?

Fred. You got a quarter, 'cause I seen it, and I wanna go ter the movies too!

Jim. Wot yer t'ink I got money for? To take you ter movies, wot?

Fred. Jus' oncet.

Jim. Naw!

Mother. You gotta quit yer scrappin' or else clear out, the both of yer.

Jim. Well, I am goin' out. (*To Fred.*) And I aint takin' you.

Maggie. Chimmie!

Jim. Wot's up, now?

Maggie. Will yer mail a letter fer me, Chimmie?

Jim. Wot letter?

Maggie. To Santy Claus.

Jim. Aw, go wan!

Maggie. Why not, Chimmie? Won't yer, please?

Nelly. Won't yer please, Chimmie? I got somethin' in it, too.

Jim. (*Disgustedly.*) Aw, yer crazy! Naw, I won't!

Mother. Wot yer talkin' about, Maggie? There aint no Santy Claus. Now quit yer noise fer a while. Yer drivin' me half crazy.

Jim. I aint makin' no noise.

Maggie. Why, ma, teacher said Santy would give us things at Christmas.

Mother. Well, he won't! Now keep still!

Fred. Aint we goin' ter have no Christmas, Ma?

Nellie. Aint we, Ma?

Mother. No, yer aint! There now! I hate the very name of it. Givin' other people things you'd rather keep yerself. That is all there is to it! I got better things to do wid my money. If I had any extra money, I would get myself a dress a sight before I'd spend it on dolls fer you, if that is wot yer drivin' at! Now will yer all keep quiet, or will I give yer a lickin'?

Jim. Well, I'm goin' out!

(*The door opens quickly and Tom, an older fellow, slips in and closes it behind him. He locks it carefully.*)

Tom. Be still, all of yous. Don' make any noise now.

Mother. Wotever is the matter, Tom? You aint done anything, have yer?

Tom. Yes, I have too. Keep quite a minute. I may get took up fer stealin'.

Mother. Heaven save us, Tom! You aint never stole nothin', have yer?

Tom. Yes, I have too. Don't look at me like that. I would do it over again.

Mother. Yer a wicked boy, a wicked dreadful boy! How did yer do it?

Tom. I aint ashamed a bit. After all, nothin' may happen. I was goin' past that old Irish woman's door, and I see it was open an her purse on the table. She is nothin' but an old miser. It's common talk she has a box of money laid by. Wot right have people to save up their money like that w'en there's others that needs it to use right here and now, so I just turned right in and got it, and I would have got away easy enough if she hadn't of happened to be coming upstairs at the very minute I stepped out. I ducked in here as quick as I could. There's a chance she didn't see me.

Mother. Aint you ashamed of yourself, you good-for-nothing? You may have got us into all sorts of trouble. If the cop comes after you, he will most likely arrest me too.

Maggie. Will they take us?

Mother. It's likely they'll take every one of us. You step right out of here with yer stolen money. I aint gonna have it found in this room. You'd ought to think shame to yourself, Thomas Hooligan!

Tom. Aw, quit scarin' the kids. There won't nothin' happen if yous dont make a fuss.

(*A knock sounds at the door; all huddle together, frightened.*)

Nellie. (*Crying.*) Lemme git out! I wanna git out!

Mother. (*Fiercely.*) Shut up!

(*A quavering voice says, "Mrs. Hooligan, ma'am."*)

Tom. That's her!

Mother. (*To children.*) Be quiet now, every one of yer! (*Aloud*) Who is there? Wot do yer want?

Voice. (*With strong Irish accent.*) Oi'm afther borrerin' yer cough medicine.

Mother. (*To Tom.*) Wot shall I do?

Tom. Let her in. Bluff it through. (*He takes an unconcerned attitude, reading the paper.*)

Mother. Now don't say nothin', none of yer! Be real friendly to her, and don't act queer or scared or she will be sure to think somethin's wrong. (*Aloud.*) Come in, Mrs. O'Flaherty. You are welcome to anythin' we got!

(*Door opens and spirit enters in the guise of a very old Irish woman.*)

Spirit. (*Hobbling in.*) Thank ye, thank ye, Mis' Hooligan. Oi'll be afther bringin' it back safe agin to yez.

Mother. Oh, you aint to be in no trouble for that, Mrs. O'Flaherty! Any time will do. (*Gives her the bottle.*) I do hope you aint got cold. This is a fierce time of year to have a cold.

Spirit. (*Beaming and sitting down.*) Bless the saints, no. 'Tis kind indade of yez to be askin' afther me, but Oi'm in the best of health, savin' only the rheumatiz. It is for the little child next door I want this. Shure it is enough to make the heart bleed to listen to the colleen, coughin' her life away.

Mother. Is that right now? I didn't know there was no one sick in the house.

Spirit. Sick, is it? Shure, they're nothing but sick.

Maggie. (*Timidly.*) Is it the little girl wid yeller curls as is sick?

Spirit. Bless yer swate heart, that it is, and terrible sick too. And her poor mother without the cint in her purse to pay for a docther. Achone! 'Tis hard times. But Oi've thought that the rist of us by the givin' a penny here and a penny there might git somethin' togither to hilp the poor mother. Shure Oi wud niver have dared to ask yez but ye have been so frindly and kind to me, Oi make bould to spake of it. It would be a grand Christmas present shure,—a docther for the bit of a gurrul.

Mother. Oh no indeed, Mis' O'Flaherty. We aint got enough to live on ourselves this winter as you can well see. I dunno wot we would come to if we took to givin' away our savin's to others. There wouldn't none of the others do it fer me, an' w'y should I fer them?

Spirit. Shure ye mustn't feel so, Mis'. Oi know of many a wan would give ye half the last loaf of bread he had in the world, if ye were in nade of it.

Mother. (*Roughly.*) I aint never saw any signs of it yet.

Spirit. Shure, don't Oi know it? It is mesilf that has seen it, many's the toime. (*To Maggie.*) Oi kin tell yez what to do, if ye feel loike hilpin' the poor little Mary nixt door. Her mother is aff to wurruk the while it is day toime, and the poor choild is lift there alone from mornin' to noight, and niver a frind to play wid her. Why don't ye shlip in and be the frind to her? Shure, 'twud plaze her more than anythin'.

Maggie. Could I, Ma?

Nellie. I'd like to go too.

Spirit. Now listen to that! Shure, Oi'll take yez in mesilf and it's that happy she will be. And there's another little gurrul lives on the floor above is goin' to hilp me give a bit Christmas party for the colleen. Oi've not the money to spind mesilf to buy her more than the shmall bit of a three, but if yez could buy a cint's worth of colored papers, and make her the thrimmins fer it, it is shoutin' fer joy ye'd have her.

Maggie. I got five cents in my bank. (*She runs to get a box.*)

Fred. (*Suddenly.*) Aint you got lots and lots of money in a box? (*Tom jerks him savagely, his mother frowns and mutters, "Be still."*)

Spirit. Shure ma'am, yer little by has touched me on me greatest trouble. It is tirrible hard to have money laid boi, and yit not spind it to make childer happy at the Christmas toime.

Mother. Never mind what the bad boy says. He ain't never heard none of us speak of it. Yer got a right to yer own money. Well, I must be about me work. (*She picks up broom and starts to sweep.*)

Spirit. And Oi must be steppin'. A Merry Christmas to ye!

Mother. And the same to yous.

Spirit. If it wasn't fer the throuble and sickness about me I wud have that same. For though Oi'll be all alone the day, Oi am hopin' to have me darlin' by wid me widin' the month. 'Tis you are the fortunate to have the foine family of childer, and that grand upstandin' son. May he niver have the throuble me son Pat has had, but always be a blessin' to ye!

Mother. (*Bitterly.*) Sons in these days aint worth much but to be a worry and torment to their mothers.

Spirit. Niver ye belave it, ma'am. If ye had lost the childer Oi have, ye'd know the worth of thim bether. Shure even a son that has done wrong may live to be a blessin' yit, and that is what Oi am hopin' fer from me own by.

Mother. Well, I'm not sayin' but what it might be hard to be all alone.

Maggie. Are youse goin' ter be all alone fer Christmas?

Nellie. Anyhow, we'll come to yer party.

Jim. (*Suddenly.*) Say, I kin put up yer Christmas tree? Y' got a box to nail it in, wot?

Spirit. Shure, that wud be grand, indade. Oi am afther nadin' the bit hilp wid it.

Fred. I could help youse as good as he could.

Spirit. Ye're the kind little by, surely, and so loike me own Michael, Oi could almost belave it was himsilf.

Maggie. What has happened to your little boys?

Spirit. Shure, Oi thry not to grieve, for they are all happy now. They are dead, darlint, all save the wan, me youngest, who was me pride and joy. I don't moind tellin' ye, for he is to be wid me agin widin' the month. 'Tis in the cruel prison he has been for four long years, come next Easter.

Mother. (*Drawing nearer to Tom.*) Aw, listen to that, now!

Spirit. It was all on account of his love fer me the poor by did it, but Oi was sick at the toime, and he earnin nothin' at all, at all; and he got to thinkin' of the money rich folk had till he fair hated thim. Shure he was nothin' liss than out o' his moind wid the worry and his love fer me. So he inters three or four houses unbeknownst to me, who was lyin' sick in me bed the whoile, belavin' him out lookin' fer a job. And he brought me a grand basket of fruit and such, and was sittin' by me bidside so plazed and proud, shure, whin in comes the polace, and the nixt momint he is gone, and Oi niver seen him since, me bein' too sick to git to the thrial. But Oi write to me by ivery day, if it is no more than a loine.

Mother. And now he is to come out, aint he?

Spirit. Bliss all the saints, yis! Iver since he wint away, Oi have saved and scrimped and put by, and did widout, and now Oi have the money ready, and he's to be released near a year before his toime is up, fer his good conduct.

Tom. (*Uneasily.*) What has the money got to do wid it?

Spirit. Why it is this way. Me poor by was arristed on the wan charge only, but there's three other charges aginst him, waitin' fer him, he havin' intered four houses, no liss. Shure he did not know what he was doin', manin' only to hilp his poor ould mother, and knowin' no other way. An two won't priss the matter, belavin' him to have had his full punishment, an' indade it is thrue that he has. But the fourth wud bring him to thrial again, some foine ould vases and such havin' been broke by Pat (*that is me by's name, Pat*) while he was escapin'. And Oi have the money all ready to give him, so he'll not prosecute. It has cost me dear to git it, especially at such toimes as Christmas, whin it goes to me heart to scrimp on prisints to childer, but 'tis over now.

(*Tom slips out of the room.*)

Mother. (*Awkwardly.*) Well, we aint got nothin' to speak of,—bein' as we aint goin' in fer Christmas none—but if you like ter come in ter dinner wid us tomorrer,—w'y, mebbe it won't be so lonesome fer ye.

Spirit. Shure it is the koind heart ye have, to be afther askin' in a poor ould body loike me.

Maggie. An' in the mornin' we'll all work on things fer the tree. I learned how to make paper balls at school.

Nellie. I can make things too.

Fred. Gee, so can I!

Spirit. Shure, Mis' Hooligan, ye got some darlin' little childer!

Mother. Well, it's a fact, they are pretty good fer kids.

Jim. Gimme yer letters, kids, an I'll mail em fer yer.

Mother. Lemme see 'em a minute first, Chimmie!

(*As she reads the letters, Tom re-enters room.*)

Tom. Say ma'am, did yous know yer purse was on yer table an yer door open? (*Holds out purse to her.*)

Spirit. Shure that is koind in ye! Did ye come way back just fer that?

Tom. Oh, I didn't mind. But that's a crazy kind of place fer yous to leave yer money. You ought to take more care of it.

Spirit. The very words me Pat used to say to me! But shure Oi have got such grand neighbors, there is not wan of thim Oi couldn't thrust. It is not loikely anywan would rob an ould body loike me! Well, Oi must be steppin'. Thank ye koindly and a Merry Christmas to ye!

All. Merry Christmas!

(*Christmas Day slips in as the curtain falls.*)

Scene III

The scene is laid in the Anybodys' home.

In the handsomely furnished library. It is now in wild confusion. The floor is strewn with paper, string, half tied gifts, and ornaments for a partially trimmed tree which stands near the window. A fire is burning in grate at the right. Before it sits Gwen., furiously sewing.

(*Enter Ruth.*)

Ruth. Shall I light up, Miss Gwendolen?—Miss Gwendolen, shan't I turn on the lights for you? You will hurt your eyes, sewing when it is so dark. (*She comes forward to Gwen's chair, and receiving no reply, touches her on the shoulder.*) Miss Gwendolen!

Gwen. (*Crossly.*) Well, what?

Ruth. (*Timidly.*) I just asked if you do not want the lights on.

Gwen. I don't care. Do what you like. Just let me alone. (*Ruth switches on the light near Gwen, who jerks around beside it, and continues sewing.*)

(*Enter Robert, looking for something.*)

Rob. Oh say, Gwen.—Say, Gwen! Well, what is the matter with you? Are you deaf?

Gwen.—Oh, I wish people would let me alone for a minute. I can't sew a stitch without someone asking me for something or other. I have got to finish this towel and get it wrapped up, let me tell you, before night, and it is just about driving me crazy!

Rob. Well, who is stopping you? Go on and sew and see if I care. A fellow can't say a word in this house without someone jumping on him. You and Millicent make me pretty tired. I was going to tell you something, but now I won't. (*Gwen. resumes her work, jerking her chair around with the back to him.*) First Millicent jumps on me, and then you junp on me. Hope I go away to school next yea". If Dad won't send me, I bet I run away anyhow. No use sticking around in a house with a bunch of cross girls. Well, don't say anything, then! (*He kicks some of the papers aside and wanders over to the tree.* This is a pretty bum old tree, this is. The man that picked out this tree must have been cock-eyed. It all goes up on one side and—

Gwen. (*Savagely.*) I picked out that tree with mother and it is the best looking one we have ever had, so there! You ask anyone who knows.

Rob. Why, Willy could have picked out a better tree. Gee, just look at it.

Gwen. Oh, you keep quiet, will you? (*She turns to her work again.*)

Rob. It has only got two branches on one side. Honest that's all. Why, just look at it. And the needles are all dropping off already, and— (*Mill., outside, calling.*) Robert. Rob—ert—Rob—ert, where are you? Answer me this minute—Robert.

Rob. (*Sulkily.*) What?

(*Enter Mill., somewhat dishevelled, extremely cross, package in hand.*)

Mill. Honestly I do think you are the most exasperating boy I ever knew. Here I have been waiting all this time for that ribbon. Where is it, now?

Rob. I couldn't find the old ribbon.

Mill. (*Flinging herself into a chair.*) Did you look?

Rob. I asked Gwen. and she wouldn't tell.

Gwen. (*Starting up.*) He never said a word to me about it. Aren't you ashamed to tell such lies, Rob? You never said one word to—

Rob. Well, I tried to and you shut me right up.

Gwen. You never did. You said you had something to tell me.

Rob. Well, I did, and then I was going to ask you about the ribbon and you—

Mill. Now that is enough. For heaven's sake don't start a fight now. I am just worn out. Start right in looking for the ribbon, Rob. You don't know where it is, do you Gwen?——Do you?

Gwen. (*Deep in her book again.*) Oh—it is in that jug.

Mill. Jug—what do you mean?

Gwen. You know, that jug, mug, vase, whatever you call it, on the table.

Mill. Of all the crazy places to put it. Get it for me, Rob. (*He complies, sulkily.*) How we are ever going to get through tonight I don't know, I'm sure. And I have been working like a slave all day, while you sit and sew —yes, I mean you, Gwen.—as if you hadn't a thing to do in the world. If I were mother, I'd soon cure you of some of your lazy ways.

Gwen. I guess I am tired, too. And I guess I am working just as hard as you, what is more!

Mill. I can't imagine what you have done to get tired. If anyone has a right to be tired, I should think I was the one, but I am keeping right on working just the same. The trouble with you is that you are plain lazy.

Gwen. Oh keep still, can't you, and let me alone. I'm busy!

Mill. (*Majestically.*) You just wait, Miss Gwendolen, till I tell mother how you answer me back. Rob, you go tell Mother I want to speak to her at once. Now we shall see what she says.

Rob. Well, what have I got to go for? I am tired, too.

Mill. Now if you are going to start in too—(*Enter Mrs. Anybody with Willy.*) Mother, I want to tell you about Gwen. She—

Gwen. (*Jumping up.*) Mother, it is not so. I—

Mrs. A. Gwendolen, be quiet,—no, not another word. *Gwen. flounces back into her chair.*) Millicent, you will have to give me your present for Aunt Agatha this minute. Is it done up?

Mill. It's upstairs. Go on up, Rob, it is right on my bed,—a big square box. (*Rob slouches out.*) Mother, I want you to know the way Gwen. spoke to me.

Gwen. Mother, I never did. She said—

Mrs. A. Gwendolen! (*Gwen. snbsides.*) I cannot talk about that, now, Millicent. I'm driven half distracted with the other things. The auto is at the door now to take the presents that go out Belleview way, and I have no notion whether they are all ready. Ruth—Ruth!—Gwendolen, you go get Ruth. (*Gwendolen does not budge. She has taken up her work again.*) Gwen. Well, never mind. Here, Willy.

Mill. Mother, make her do it.

Mrs. A. I believe I can manage my own children, Millicent. Willy, go find Ruth and tell her to come here this minute. It is most extraordinary having your father so late. It is five o'clock and he was to be home early.

Mill. Probably at the club.

Mrs. A. It is most inconsiderate of him if that is so. He knows how driven we are. (*Enter Rob with box.*) Now is that ready to go?

Mill. Oh gracious, I haven't tied it up yet. Where did you put the ribbon, Rob?

Rob. I gave it to you.

Mill. You did not. Oh, yes, here it is. (*She ties up the box.*)

Rob. (*Looking out of the window.*) It's snowing again.—Say, can I go out?

Mrs. A. No, you cannot. I have a great deal too much for you to do here.

Rob. Oh rats. (*He kicks a chair.*) What do you want me to do, anyhow?

Mrs. A. Hurry, Millicent.—I don't know just what particular thing, Rob, but I want you on hand to help. Besides, it is too late to be out. It is perfectly dark in the street.

(*Enter Ruth with Willy.*)

Mrs. A. What have you done with those packages I gave you this noon?

Ruth. They are out on the hall table, ma'am.

Mrs. A. Isn't that done yet, Millicent? (*Millicent ties it up and drops it on the floor by her chair.*) Take this one out too, Ruth—and Ruth, tell James to help you carry them out to the auto. (*Exit Ruth.*) Now, Millicent, pay attention. I have all our presents to Aunt Agatha and Celeste and Uncle Rob. Gwendolen, did you tie up your handkerchief for Uncle Rob? I do not remember. Gwen!

Gwen. Yes, it is all tied up.

Mrs. A. Is it out in the hall?

Gwen. I don't know.

Mrs. A. Think!—Gwendolen!

Gwen. Oh heavens!—Yes—No. I don't know. I told you I didn't.

Mill. How you can let her speak to you like that I don't see.

Rob. It is not dark outside, either.

Mrs. A. That will do, Robert.

Mill. It is as dark as a pocket.

Rob. Well, it is not dark either. Honest. You come here and look out. (*He trips over Willy, who is talking to himself.* Get out of the road there.

Mill. I wish there wasn't any Christmas, anyhow. I never knew anything so cranky as it makes this family.

Gwen. I should say so. Cross and cranky.

Mrs. A. (*Crossly.*) No one need be cross. What is it, Rob?

Rob. Well, it isn't dark. All the boys from across the street are outside looking in our windows.

Mrs. A. Then pull down the shade this minute.

Mill. It is that dreadful Swedish baker's children.

Rob. They are not dreadful. Shut up, Willy.

Mill. And the reason they hang around so, Mother, is because Rob plays with them and encourages them. Every chance he gets he runs right over there.

Rob. A fellow has got to have some fun.

Mrs. A. Not with children whose parents I know nothing about. You will displease me greatly if you have anything more to do with them. No, Robert, you need not argue the point. Pull down the shade as I told you and when you do it motion them away. (*Rob slouches to the window and looks out without obeying.*) This is getting to be positively a poor section, Millicent. And of course our property is constantly depreciating. Really it is outrageous for the city to permit such deterioration—well, Robert?

Rob. I don't see why I can't go out if you let Jane go out. I am five years older than she is.

Mrs. A. Jane! Where is Jane?

Rob. She is out playing in the snow and I think you might let me go too.

Mrs. A. This is too bad of you, Millicent. Do you mean to tell me that Jane has been left outdoors like this till after dark?

Mill. I am sure I didn't know she was there. I was busy.

Mrs. A. Gwendolen, did you know about Jane?

Mill. Gwen!

Mrs. A. Gwendolen, answer your mother.

Gwen. What?

Mrs. A. You heard me.

Gwen. I did not. I don't know anything about it. You said something about Jane.

Rob. I bet you heard all right.

Gwen. Well, why doesn't someone bring her in now? I don't see why you need fuss so.

Mill. You might go yourself.

Mrs. A. Ruth!—You know I think that girl is deaf. Rob, run and tell Jane to come right in this minute. (*Rob obeys with unusual promptness.*)

Mill. Probably he will run off with those boys now, and then you will have to hunt him up.

Willy. Can I sit up to see Santa Claus? (*No one pays any attention to Willy.*)

Mrs. A. I cannot imagine why your father does not come. (*Rob is heard to say outside, "Mother won't like it if you bring him in."*)

(*Enter Jane, leading strange child and followed by Rob.*)

Jane. See, there is our tree. Now you must come over to the fire and get all warm.

Mrs. A. and Mill. Who is this?——For heaven's sake, Jane, whom have you picked up, now?

Jane. I am Mrs. Van-der-bilt and this is my little boy.

Mrs. A. Don't be silly, Jane. I want to know.

Jane. Now, Mother, he is a good little boy.

Rob. I have seen him with the Nielson boys.

Mill. That is that Swedish baker.

Mrs. A. Little boy, I'm afraid you will have to run home now. Your mother will be wanting you.

Jane. No—o! I want him to stay here.

Child. You got a dandy Christmas tree.

Mrs. A. Come, you will have to go home now. Run along.

Jane. Why, Mother? Why?

Mill. Tell him to go, Jane.

Child. The Neilsons ain't got a tree, this year, because they cost so much. It is just awful how much they cost. But they've got a plan—

Jane. What?

Mill. (*Interrupting.*) You are one of the Neilson children yourself, are you not?

Chi'd. Oh no! Why, the Neilsons are rich. They got a bakery. But they're going to let me have Christmas with them. And this year they are going to—

Bob. Say, you are shivering. Why don't you move up to the fire and get warm?

Jane. Yes, come on. You have to get warm. (*She pulls him to the fire.*)

Mrs. A. Jane is the most extraordinary child. Really unaccountable.

Mill. Why don't you insist on her taking this boy out? It is terrible to let her go around collecting strange children this way. Sometime she will get some disease.

Mrs. A. Little boy, if you do not go home by yourself, I shall have to call some one to take you. Aren't you warm yet?

Child. I'm pretty near warm. But it's so cold outside that you need a lot of warmness to last.

Jane. Mother, please let him tell about the Neilsons.

Child. Why, Mrs. Neilson says Christmas is the time to show goodwill to everyone—

Rob. Nothing like that in our family. It is all tissue paper, and ribbons, and a hustle.

Jane. But what are the Neilsons going to do?

Child. They have asked in Mrs. O'Toole, and Nancy and the Francas and some other kids, and they are going to have a present for everyone hidden somewhere, and gee, I'm going to have a present too!—And we are all going to stay to supper. And we all have to find our own presents, if you find a present that belongs to some other fellow, why, you got to—.

Gwen. Isn't anyone going to have more than one present?

Child. Oh no. I ain't ever had any present before.

Jane. I never have either.

Mill. Oh Jane! Aren't you ashamed? Last year you had about twenty.

Rob. Well, I think one present is all right, now honest I do.

Jane. I think it will be such fun.

Child. Did you really get twenty presents?

Jane. (*Apologetically.*) I couldn't help it. They just went and gave them to me.

Child. What did you do with them?

Mrs. A. (*Firmly.*) Where is your home, child?

Child. I haven't got any real home.

Mill. Of course you have a home. You must live somewhere.

Child. I used to stay with a man over on Linden Street, but he has gone away.

Mrs. A. Was he your father?

Child. No, he just looked after me. I used to work for him.

Mrs. A. Work!

Child. He had a shop, and I used to take things around for him. But one morning he never came back, and then the Francas let me come there, and the Nielsons are the kindest people you ever knew. Why, any time I ain't had anything to eat, they let me come in, and give me some bread, and they send bread to the Francas and lots of people. Mrs. Nielson said once "we mayn't be able to give money, but so long as we keep this here bakery there shan't no one be turned away hungry who really wants for bread, and Mrs. Nielson says at Christmas she has to do something extra nice, 'cause it is the birthday of the Christ Child.

Mrs. A. Millicent, I wonder if the poor child is hungry now; why couldn't we give him a little supper with Willy?

Mill. I suppose it would not hurt us to let him have a bowl of bread and milk.

Rob. Let me get it. (*He hurries out.*)

Child. I'm just fine. You can always get warm in the Nielson's too, 'cause they keep the big ovens going all night.

Jane. When are you going there, tomorrow? When does their party begin?

Child. I am going just as early in the afternoon as I can. I don't see how I'll be able to wait all morning.

Gwen. Won't you get any present in the morning?

Child. No, but it will be all the more fun to have to wait.

Jane. I think so too.

Mrs. A. Mrs. Nielson must be a very good woman. I do not see how she can afford to have in the whole neighborhood to dinner this way. It must cost her a great deal.

Child. They got a box in their house and they call it the Xmas box, and whenever they save their money, or go without something, or walk instead of taking the street car, they put the money in the box, and then at Xmas they have a lot, and they do something nice with it, and this year,——Oh!

(*Enter Rob with bowl of bread and milk which he places in the child's hands.*)

Rob. Now you go ahead and eat all you want!

Child. Gee, that's good! I guess everyone does something nice at Xmas, don't they?

Mrs. A. I am afraid we do not do much but get upset. (*To Mill.*) Do you think that will be enough for him?

Mill. I'll get a piece of cake or something to end off with. (*Exit.*)

Gwen. I want to have a Christmas box. I think it is a good idea.

Jane. So do I. Can't I, Mother?

Rob. What's that?

Jane. I'll tell you about it, Rob. It's lots of fun.

Mrs. A. Would you like to stay, little boy, and see our tree lighted this evening? Dear me, the tree is not all trimmed yet, is it?

Gwen. I'll put the rest of the things on.

Child. Oh, could I put on one thing? Just one?

Rob. Sure. Here, Gwen, lemme help too. (*Gwen. and Rob start trimming.*)

Mrs. A. Finish the milk, child. They will save a ball for you to put on.

Jane. But we must not light it till Daddy comes home.

(*Enter Millicent with the cake.*)

Mill. Here is something to end with. Was the bread and milk good?

Child. It was just—just grand.

Mrs. A. Why do you not eat your cake? Don't you like it?

Child. I thought—if you don't care—could I take it home to Carmella that lives with the Francas? She is so little, and perhaps they ain't had any supper.

Mill. You eat that piece, and I'll get you another for the little girl.

Mrs. A. Get something a little more substantial too. (*Exit Millicent.*)

Rob. Here is your ball if you want to put it on. (*The child takes it, and with great care, fastens it to the tree.*)

Gwen. I suppose I might as well pick up a little of this mess.

Jane. I'll help you. (*They pick up papers, etc.*)

Child. (*Surveying his ball.*) You been awful good to me. To have this party and then a big party tomorrow,—it's—say, it's,—why I just don't believe it is me.

Jane. But I wish you could see our tree.

Child. It is lovely.

Rob. But lighted.

Mrs. A. We may light it up again some other evening, if the candles are not all burnt out.

Rob Why doesn't Daddy come home?

Mrs. A Your poor Father! I suppose he is having to wait for a street car on some cold corner now. I wish we had not told him we needed the auto for the presents.

Gwen. Whatever are we going to do about those presents we have not sent off yet?

(*Enter Mill. with package*)

Mill. Here you are! (*Gives it to child.*) I don't see why those things can't wait, Mother. No one is going to be hurt by not getting them promptly. And so long as they are not all done, let us just enjoy the evening and rest up.

Mrs. A. (*Hesitating.*) Your father would like that better, I am sure. Really I suppose it is not a vital matter whether we get the presents off tonight or tomorrow.

Mill. Or even the next day.

Jane. Poor Daddy! Let's just all have fun tonight.

Child. I got to go, honest. And say,—thank you for just everything. It's been grand. Good bye.

Mrs. A. Do you know, Millicent, it is remarkable what nice manners that child has.

Jane. Come play with me again.

Child. I will. Goodbye.

Rob. Couldn't we light just one candle?

Mrs. A. Well—light that little one by the window. You do it, Milly.

Child. I'll look back at the window from outside. (*He goes out.*)

Rob. (*Closing the door and returning to the rest.*) Say, it is cold outdoors.

(*Millicent has lighted the candle and stands looking out.*)

Mill. Father is being dreadfully delayed. I hope the snow has not blocked the cars.

Mrs. A. I hope that poor child got home all right. He has such a thin little coat. And you say it is still snowing, Millicent?

Gwen. It's nice to have real Christmas weather, though.

Rob. It looks like Christmas in here too, now. Doesn't the old tree look pretty good, though?

Mill. And isn't it just heavenly to stop that horrible rush! I'm getting Christmasier and Christmasier inside, every minute now.

Mrs. A. And children, let us all promise ourselves that another year— (*All laugh.*)

Mill. That is what we say every year.

Mrs. A. We are doing better this time, though, for we are making our good resolutions before instead of after,—even if it is only a few hours before. And next year—

All. We really will!

Mrs. A. And in the meantime, let every one of us resolve to make this a very merry Christmas!

(*Christmas Day enters, smiling, and comes forward before the curtain, as it falls behind him.*)

Epilogue

(*At the end of scene 3, Christmas comes forward before the curtain.*)

Christmas (*Shouting.* Father Time! I say! Father Time! Where are you? (*Enter Father Time, before the curtain, from the other side*)

Christmas. (*Joyfully.*) It worked! It worked! They all want me; they were all glad to see me! They are all going to have a Merry Christmas!

Father Time. What did I tell you, my child? It only needed the very easiest, simplest kind of magic!

Christmas. Oh, I am so happy! (*Turning to the audience.*) And you people out there! You want me, too, don't you? You are going to welcome me, aren't you? For if there is any one of you still, who is not sure, let Father Time send the spirit into your home, and you'll find it will work! So Merry Christmas to you all I am coming to everyone here early next Monday (*or whatever day Christmas comes on*) morning!

Merry Christmas!

CURTAIN

JUVENILE XMAS CANTATAS

SANTA'S JOY FACTORY (New 1912). Text by Edith Sanford Tillotson. Music by I. H. Meredith. The plot is laid in "Santa's" workshop, which has for its motto "Joy for all Hearts". The various toys and dolls become for the time real live characters and take part in the cantata by dialog and song, to the amusement of both old and young. Prominent among these are the funny "Jack-in-the-Box", "The Noah s Ark Animals ' and the "Little Japanese Dolls", with thee songs and sayings, while the charm of the "Negro Mammy's Lullaby ' will linger long in the hearts of all who hear this delightful cantata. Price 25 cents, net, postpaid.

KORONATION OF KING KRIS KRINGLE. Libretto by Fred. Emerson Brooks. Music by I. H Meredith This cantata is especially commendable from both a literary and a musical standpoint It is one of the best combinations of wit, humor and pathos that it is possible to find in any one cantata One verse of the song entitled "The Spickety Man" will make everybody happy, while "Aunt Cloe'" a characteristic negro mammy, helps to make every moment of the evening enjoyable, in witty sayings and humorous songs. Price, 25 cents net.

HOW SANTA CLAUS EXPLAINED. Libretto by Jean M. Thompson. Music by Carl F. Price. An up-to-the-minute cantata full of bright catchy songs and choruses with just enough laughable easy-to-learn dialog to carry it along Be sure to examine this one if you would give the children an evenings entertainment that all can enjoy. A laugh on every page. Price, 25 cents, net, postpaid.

TO SANTA'S LAND WITH THE DREAM MAN. Libretto by Lizzie DeArmond. Music by I. H. Meredith. The children want to visit Santa Claus' Land, but not knowing the way are prevented until the coming of the Dream Man, who offers to lead them there and bring them back in safety the next morning. The Dream Man comes as soon as the children are asleep and with his help they cross the Bridge of Dreams, where they find the things which always delight the children's hearts in "Santa's Land". The Dream Man, true to his promise, brings them all home in good season, and as they cross again the Bridge of Dreams they awaken to the fact that the true joy of Christmas is in the coming of the Christ Child and not in Santa Claus after all. Closes with a song of rejoicing because Christ the Lord is born. With a little effort this can be made very beautiful. Price 25 cts., net, $3.00 per doz., postpaid. Full orchestration $2.50.

MOTHER GOOSE'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS. Libretto by Lizzie DeArmond. Music by I. H Meredith. This cantata is sure to delight both old and young. Mother Goose as the chief character, and her retinue of relatives, take you on a charming visit to Santa Claus. This cantata has some decided musical hits, among which are the songs "I'm the Little Bird that Tells" (published also in sheet music form), "Old Dr. Foster", "Twinkling Stars", "Lazy Tom", "Song of the Snow Fairies", "We're the Dolls that Santa Left Behind", and closes with the beautiful chorus, "Hail, Father Santa Claus". Price 25 cents, net, postpaid.

IN WINTERLAND. Libretto by Lizzie DeArmond. Music by J. W. Lerman. King Winter rules in this cantata and with his willing subjects, "North Wind", "Jack Frost the Painter", "Frost Fairies", "Sunbeams", "Rain Drops", etc., etc., they weave a magic spell of joy about each heart at the Christmas season. It is principally a cantata of singing with just enough dialog or recitation to make it a connective whole. The musical numbers, "I'm Jack Frost the Painter", "Sleigh Bell Song", "Song of the Skaters" and "The Coasting Song" are decided hits Santa Claus with his pack full of toys appears and sings one song, which could be omitted if no Santa Claus is desired. Price, 25 cents, net, postpaid.

JOLLY TIMES WITH THE SANTA CLAUS BAND. Libretto by Lizzie DeArmond. Music by I. H. Meredith. Santa Claus is accompanied by his band of ten boys who are full of fun and frolic, yet ever ready with a helping hand to assist old Santa in his efforts to bring good cheer to all.

Their "Jolly Time" is made more delightful by the coming of "The Eight Wind Fairies", "Grandfather Clock" "Eight Japanese Girls ', "Postman", "Uncle Sam and Six Sailor Boys", "Columbia and Six Daughters", and numerous other original and interesting characters who take part in the festivities of the evening, which are climaxed by the closing chorus, "Hail the Gift of Love". Price, 25 cents, net, postpaid.

UNCLE SAM'S CELEBRATION. Libretto by Lizzie DeArmond. Music by I. H. Meredith and J. W. Lerman. Uncle Sam and Columbia have a jolly time celebrating the Christmas season, in which "Messenger Boys", "Telephone Girls", "Postmen", "Newsboys", "Bootblacks", "The Weather Bureau Man", "Indians" and various other well known characters take active part, principally in songs. There is very little dialog in this cantata, and NO SANTA CLAUS Price 25 cents net, postpaid.

THE INTERRUPTED PROGRAM. Libretto by Elmer Ellsworth Higley. Music by I. H. Meredith. It tells of a school which started to render a Christmas program, but is always interrupted by some unexpected person or thing which prevents the rendering of the program as planned, but provides one as entertaining and helpful as can be planned with the talent you may have at your command. It lends itself to whatever conditions may prevail and is therefore adaptable to any school or community. Price 25 cents, net, postpaid.

A SURPRISE FOR SANTA CLAUS. Libretto by Edith Sanford Tillotson. Music by I. H. Meredith. In this cantata, Mother Goose acts as hostess, assisted by her company of helpers while Santa Claus, that "Busy, Busy Man", is the guest of the evening, and instead of having to entertain the company as Santa Claus is usually expected to do, he is invited to a comfortable seat and is royally entertained. This cantata contains only seven vocal numbers and is one of the easiest ones to produce we have in our list. The speaking parts are all interesting and easy to render. Price, 25 cents, net, postpaid.

YE TREEVING OF YE GOODE MYNCE PYE. Libretto by Josephine A. Van Tassel. Music by Alfred Lincoln Schultz. This cantata is designed as an entertainment FOR, rather than BY, the children. It is to be rendered by the young men and the young women of the church or school, although the children might be utilized by a good conductor in the choruses and minor parts.

This is an old English story and told in old English vernacular But little staging or costuming A charming entertainment and a delight to all who may hear it Price 20 cents, net, postpaid.

JOHNNIE DOUBTER. Libretto by Fred Emersom Brooks. Music by I. H. Meredith and Grant Colfax Tullar. The plot is so original, the characters so natural, the lesson so pointed and withal so beautiful that there is a charm about this cantata seldom found in such works. Yes, there is a "Santa Claus" in spite of "Johnnie's" doubts, but in this cantata he is so wholesome and so true to the highest ideals of what he should be that every "Johnnie Doubter" is bound to adm his presence at the Christmas season. Price, 25 cents per copy, net, postpaid

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NEW CHRISTMAS PLAYS

Bett 's Christmas. A play in two Acts, by Anne M. Palmer. 9 characters, 3 adults: 2 male, 1 female; 6 children, 3 boys, 3 girls. Time of rendition about 25 minutes. Price 25 cts., Postpaid.
Mrs. Wilson and her two children, Jack and Betty, who through the death of husband and father have lost all that they once enjoyed, including their beautiful home, are trying to plan an enjoyable Christmas with forty cents, which is all they have left.
While the mother and Jack are out shopping, other children from the same tenement spend the time with Betty and they pretend to play a game of telling what they would like to have for Christmas.
Uncle Jim, who has been lost to all the family for some years, comes in upon them and as "Santa Claus' Helper" makes the Christmas all that each one desires and restores to the poor widow and her two children the beautiful home which they lost.

Santa's Rescue. Two mysterious pieces of paper fall into the hands of the children, one being found by the boys and one by the girls. The meaning of the inscription on each remains a mystery until it is discerned that by placing the papers together they have the message that the "Old Witch" of the North has captured "Santa" and holds him in an ice prison at the North Pole. Of course there could be no Merry Christmas without their "parton saint," so guided by the "Fairy Godmother" they start for the North Pole to rescue him. The "Old Witch" endeavors to block the rescuers' way by the assistance of "Old Zero" and the "Snow Fairies" but when they learn that the snow drifts they are piling up are to aid in keeping Santa from his usual Christmas activities they get the "Sunbeam Fairies" to come to their aid and melt the snow while they bind with a frozen cord the "Old Witch," who is found indulging in a nap which she takes only once every hundred years. With the "Old Witch" powerless and in their control the Rescue of Santa is an easy matter.

Tho' belated somewhat by his enforced stay at the North Pole, the children are glad to become his "aids" in spreading a "Merry Christmas" through all the world. This is a very clever plot, well worked out, and will make a decided hit for the Christmas season. 4 Boys and 5 Girls with any number of Fairies. Time about one hour. Price 25 cents, Postpaid.

The Christmas Wood. A play for children in two Acts. 35 characters, 23 girls and 12 boys. Prices; Single copy 30 cents, per dozen $3.00, Postpaid. Time of rendition about one hour.
Four little girls watching for Santa Claus decide to start out on a search for him, but after quite a journey discover that they are lost in the "Christmas Wood," where on the night before Christmas the "Goblins," "Passion," "Sloth," "Sulkiness," "Selfishness," "Greed," "Envy," "Falsehood." etc., are permitted to roam.
These children are shown how closely related they are to these unpleasant "Goblins" and they develop such a dislike for them that they determine never again to allow such characters to mar the beauty of their lives. "Christmas Spirit" then comes and drives the "Goblins" from the Christmas Wood and their places are taken by the "Christmas Sprites," "Good Will," "Generosity," "Truth," "Mercy," "Faith," "Hope," "Joy," etc., and in the end the ones who were lost in the "Christmas Wood" seeking for Santa Claus, find that "Love" is the real Santa Claus and all go out with "Love" in their hearts to spread abroad the true Christmas Cheer.

Christmas Cheer. A play in two Acts for six females. Time of rendition about 20 minutes. Price 25 cents, Postpaid.
Four young ladies are the members of a Sunday School class whose teacher has asked that each member of the class shall do something to bring "Christmas Cheer" to someone who would not otherwise be remembered. Each of the girls, unbeknown to the other members of the class, decides to make the "Jones Family" the object of her Christmas visit.
The "Jones Family" consists of Caroline and Amanda, who are very poor and earn their living knitting. Christmas Eve finds them trying to confort each other in their loneliness, when one after another the four girls of the Sunday School Class call to dispense their mite of Christmas Cheer. It turns out to be quite a "Surprise party" not only for the "Jones's but for the Sunday School Class as well. While one of the girls prepares the Christmas pie, the others of the class provide a pleasing entertainment. When the Christmas pie is cut, Caroline and Amanda find that it is filled with the presents which the class brought. There was "Christmas Cheer" in abundance which was shared equally by those who gave and those who received.